

**EAST HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
35 WHEELBARROW LANE, EAST HAVEN, CT 06513
TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2009 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: MRS. VITALE, MR. FINKLE, MRS. GERACI-ANASTASIO, MR. HAMMELL, MR. INGLESE, MRS. PADUA and MRS. VINEYARD

ARRIVED LATE: MR. DENUZZO and MR. HENNESSEY
MRS. PATRICIA LEWIS, FINANCE MANAGER

ALSO PRESENT: MR. ANTHONY SERIO, SUPERINTENDENT
MR. FRANK MEOLI, ADMINISTRATIVE
DIRECTOR TO SUPT. MR. ARTHUR
MARTORELLA, ADMIN. CONSULTANT TO
SUPT. MRS. MARY ACQUARULO, DIRECTOR
OF PUPIL SERVICES MR. JOSEPH
TRAVAGLINO, DIRECTOR OF BLDGS. &
GROUNDS MR. PAUL RIZZA, FINANCE DIRECTOR

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Vitale, Chairperson of the Board, called the regular Board of Education meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Boardroom at the high school.

2. MINUTES

Mrs. Vitale asked for a motion for the approval of the minutes for the regular Board meeting of January 13, 2009.

Motion was made by Mr. Hammell and seconded by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio.

Any discussion on the motion? There was none.

There were no objections or abstentions to the motion. Vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Motion carries.

3. **CORRESPONDENCE**

- **Chairperson, Mrs. Marilyn Vitale**

Mrs. Vitale had no correspondence this evening.

- **Superintendent, Mr. Anthony Serio**

Mr. Serio had no correspondence this evening.

4. **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

- **Athletic Oversight, Mr. Inglese, Chair**
- **Building and Grounds, Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio, Chair**

Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio spoke about the subcommittee meeting held last night and the NESDEC presentation. It was a long presentation with a lot of information. They had gone over four options they had put together. Mr. Serio stated they were all processing it right now. He would take the information with the input of the administrative team and the administrators and they would discuss the possibilities of reconfiguring their grade alignments as they moved forward in the long-range planning committee.

Mrs. Vitale asked if there were any other reports on the subcommittees. There were none.

- **Curriculum & Instruction, Mr. Finkle, Chair**
- **Finance, Mr. Hennessey, Chair**
- **Food Service, Mrs. Vineyard, Chair**
- **Grants, Mr. Hammell, Chair**
- **Legal/Negotiations, Mr. Hammell, Chair**

- **Policies and Bylaws, Mr. DeNuzzo, Chair**
- **Personnel, Mr. Hammell, Chair**
- **PTA / PTO Advisory Committee, Mrs. Padua, Chair**
- **Special Education, Mr. Inglese, Chair**

5. **REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION**

- **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE/S**

The student representative was unavailable this evening.

- **SUPERINTENDENT**

Mr. Serio had just reported on the NESDEC meeting.

6. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Any communication from the public? There was none.

7. **SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

7.1 **Presentation by the High School Guidance Department – *Review Perspective Student Informational Session***

Mrs. Reale introduced the Guidance Counselors that were here this evening. They were Michelle Madonna, Renee Seufert and Christi McMellon. They gave a slide show presentation on a program they had done for parents with kids that were possibly considering going to alternative high schools other than coming to this high school from 8th grade. It had been an informational evening that was given by students and staff at the high school. The presentation showed all of the things offered at East Haven High School in academics, clubs and athletics. They had given a presentation at the high school, the Academy and the Middle School.

Mr. Finkle asked if they knew approximately how many students from 8th grade they lost to other schools. There was some discussion and it was stated that there were approximately 80 students from the middle school and 10-15 students from the Academy.

Mr. Hammell commented that their website was tremendous and it was updated regularly. It was a great tool for the kids. They did a great job.

Mrs. Vitale asked how many students each guidance counselor serviced. Each of them handled around 245 students and Michelle Madonna, because she was the team leader, had around 175 due to the administrative responsibilities she now had.

Mrs. Vineyard asked if any student who had been thinking of going to another school had decided to stay and come here instead. Ms. Madonna stated they had a lot of parents who said they didn't know these programs existed and they would really think about this now. Ms. Seufert explained that the student panel had a big impact on the kids.

Mr. Serio stated he knew the numbers of students that went to other schools and those included Platt Tech, Lyman Hall, and the Sound School. The numbers had lessened. There were a good amount of students that also went to Magnet Schools from East Haven. He stated the guidance counselors and staff did a great job but the students sold it. This information was worthwhile for all 8th grade parents. They would do it again in November even though they had an orientation in August.

8. OLD BUSINESS

8.1 Any questions or comments on Board Briefs of 1-13-09

Any questions or comments?

Mrs. Vitale asked Mr. Serio if he had checked into the side door of the high school not being open that the students had complained about. Mrs. Reale explained they were encouraging everyone to come in through the front entrance because of punching in if they were late, security reasons, and the possibility of doing random metal detector checks.

Mrs. Vitale asked about the scoreboards at the middle school. Mr. Rizza had some quotes. Mr. Rizza stated at the low end, they cost about \$8,000 and at the upper end around \$9,000. They did not want to get into advertising. They had the purchasing director doing some kind of search that would bring about something less pricey. Mrs. Vitale asked how long that was going to take. Mr. Rizza stated they had to bid it no matter what. There was some discussion about purchase vs. fixing the lights. It was more involved than just replacing the light bulbs because there was a circuit problem as well. Mr. Serio stated the cost of \$8,000 was for two scoreboards. There was discussion on purchasing one but it was probably not cost effective. **Mr. Serio asked Mr. Rizza to put together some specs and go out to bid to see what they received. Mr. Hammell asked if the amount included installation and Mr. Rizza stated no, but they could include that in the bid.**

Mrs. Vitale asked if there were any other questions or comments. There were none.

9.0 NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Ratification of Appointments – None.

9.2 Request for Approval of Payment of Invoices:

- **Dated January 28, 2009 for Fiscal Year 2008-09 in the Amount of \$1,753,618.70**

Mr. Serio requested the Board approve the payment of invoices dated January 28, 2009 for fiscal year 2008-09 in the amount of \$1,753,618.70.

Motion was made by Mr. Hammell and seconded by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio.

Any discussion on the motion?

Mr. Hammell asked about the large sum under insurance. Mr. Rizza explained that this was for a two-month payment contribution for both our health benefits and Worker's Comp for the months of December and January.

Mr. Hammell asked about All American Construction. This was for their cleaning contract at the Middle School, Carbone and Momauguin.

Mr. Finkle asked if the contribution they had just spoken on was pretty consistent. Mr. Rizza stated yes, it was the same amount every month. It was an annual figure and you divide it up by 12. Mr. Finkle asked if each month was the same. Mr. Rizza replied yes.

Any further discussion? There was none.

There were no objections or abstentions to the motion. Vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Motion carries. Bills were paid.

9.3 Permission to Waive the Second Reading and Approve the New and Revised Board of Education Bylaws, Series 9000-9350

Mr. Serio requested the Board's permission to waive the second reading and approve the new and revised Board of Education Bylaws, Series 9000-9350.

Motion was made by Mrs. Vineyard and seconded by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio.

Any discussion on the motion? There was none.

There were no objections or abstentions to the motion. Vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Motion carries.

9.4 Approval of the East Haven Academy Field Trip to Ellis Island, NYC on April 21, 2009

Mr. Serio requested the Board's approval for the EH Academy field trip to Ellis Island, NYC on April 21, 2009.

Motion was made by Mrs. Padua and seconded by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio.

Any discussion on the motion?

Mr. Inglese asked if the cost of \$10 covered the whole trip. Mrs. Johnson explained yes, it was because the PTO supplemented the trip.

There were no objections or abstentions to the motion. Vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Motion carries.

9.5 Cafeteria Financial Report from Whitson's Food Service

Mr. Gersbeck and Mrs. Spaziani from Whitson's gave their financial report for the period ending December 31. They stated they had also given the Board a comparison sheet that Mr. Finkle had requested for the timeframe of December of last year to December of this year. Revenue was up, the cost of food sold lower, and there was a gross profit of \$55,418. Mr. Gersbeck went through the report and spoke about the figures. There was a program profit of \$39,059 from last year to this year.

A menu was handed out, as well as an information sheet, showing how well fish sticks did on the menu. Mrs. Vineyard thanked them for putting them on the menu but felt it needed to be placed on the menu more than just one more time in order to do it justice. There was discussion on the POS information and how during the next couple of meetings they needed to discuss going out to bid. Mrs. Padua wanted to

know why they had an ice cream machine at the Middle School. Mrs. Spaziani stated that any items being sold in the vending machines were approved by the State. It was low-fat ice cream and approved for the wellness. Mr. Serio stated that the POS system might help to avoid this issue because people paid in advance and had control over that.

Mrs. Vitale stated they had requested Whitson's visit the schools and see what updates needed to be made to the kitchens. Mr. Gersbeck explained that he had gone to each school and were in the process of putting a list together for each building of the equipment and try to update it or see if it needed to be replaced. They would number them from one to ten. Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio brought up last night's meeting and what they had seen. Mr. Gersbeck stated yes, he was aware of that.

9.6 Discussion and Possible Approval of Proposed Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2009-2010

Mr. Serio stated they had a Finance Subcommittee to discuss the 2009-2010 budget. This evening he was recommending they have discussion and possible approval of the Proposed Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2009-2010 so they could present it to the Town Hall and Mayor by February 2nd.

Motion was made by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio and seconded by Mr. Hammell.

Any discussion on the motion?

Mr. Serio asked the Board to look at page 14 to see that the increase to the budget was in the amount of \$45,449,228 which was an increase of 3.73%. The total increase including two new positions for ELL teachers was an increase of \$101,100,591 or 4.65%. The total increase for all current staff, both certified and non-certified, was \$1,296,351

Mr. Serio stated this was a frugal budget in poor economic times. Mrs. Vitale stated it was hard to approve a budget

when they had no idea of how much money they were going to get back into it. It was not a completed document. Mr. Serio stated it was a budget that was a work-in progress. They needed to go through the procedures that the Town Charter required them to go through and then go back and readjust.

Any questions or comments?

Mr. Finkle asked Mr. Rizza what the date was to start the OHIO process if that was a direction they wanted to go in. Mr. Rizza stated probably in the next two to three weeks for the initial solicitation of interest. Mr. Finkle was curious as to whether this Board should entertain this because of the fact that this budget was a work-in-progress. There was a possibility of cuts from the State and the 12% cut in ECS. Things the Board might not have considered they may be forced to consider. He felt the Board should investigate the OHIO Plan to see if there were any potential savings.

Mrs. Vitale stated she had asked Mr. Rizza to look into this before; not the OHIO but paid benefits. Most stay on because they need that extra coverage.

Mr. Finkle stated anytime there was potential for significant budget cuts, a big concern was potential layoffs or things of that nature. If there were teachers with one, two, or three years until retirement, an OHIO Plan made good sense and could stave off potential layoffs by offering a retirement package. They could prepare and get an idea of the numbers they would be saving.

Mr. Rizza stated they could survey potential people to see whether there was interest in some type of plan. They could set up options for the Board to consider something with benefits or the OHIO Plan. There wasn't a cost involved to do that.

Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio asked if they would do this in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Rizza explained you had to start it by giving people three weeks to respond. Then you start to gather the financial

information and do the mathematical calculations. **Mr. Serio stated they needed to put that out and get the information and get the names of the people interested.** At that point, they have the option to design a program and either welcome all requests or look at limitations, was that correct? Mr. Rizza explained how they had done this proposal three years ago and had not gone through with it. Mr. Serio stated they had put out the proposal twice since he has been here and they did not follow through on it. They could consider some kind of incentive plan vs. OHIO Plan. Thankfully, they had retired teachers that came back to them and worked on a part-time basis as paraprofessionals, aides and reading teachers. Working part time allowed them to subsidize their medical benefits.

Mr. Finkle stated that the issue he brought up about the delta in the budget from start to finish like \$310,000 not being a complete number. This was one of his concerns about why they needed to have a little closer range on those numbers. He then explained a situation with a parent he had been working with that has an autistic child and the difficulties of the child meeting State guidelines to qualify for DDS. It was key that autistic children receive early intervention in order to help them in the long run. The after-school program the parents wanted to get him into cost \$24,000 a year in addition to the program he was in during the day. They had spoken to State representatives and hit dead end after dead end. And now another year had passed that child by. Mr. Finkle stated it bothered him normally that they were not able to do something for this. The reason he was harping on that delta was because he hoped it wasn't that big of a number that went back because it would be good if the Board could create a committee or group within the Board to review these special cases and determine if they could find the money. This was one of the cases they should find the money for. He wanted to thank Mr. DePalma and the rest of the Town Council members that made it a point to come here to hear our discussions on the budget and hopefully keep these kinds of things in mind and do something that directly benefits one of the children. Mr. Finkle stated they can't make provisions

until they get their money back, but once they get it back, maybe they could help Mrs. Acquarulo a little bit when there were special cases like he just talked about.

Mrs. Vitale thanked Mr. Finkle for bringing this to their attention. She had heard today about a stimulus package they were going to be getting of \$1.4 million of which \$700,000 was for construction and the rest was for Title I.

She asked Mr. Serio to verify this. Mr. Serio stated he had written letters to State Senator Fasano and State Representative Lawlor regarding the grants and ECS cuts and how devastating they could be to a small town like East Haven. A 12% cut would mean a \$2 million cut in our budget.

Mr. Serio stated he did not feel the number would change before it went to the Town. The only thing that might change would be if there were minor typos.

Any further discussion on the motion? There was none.

There were no objections or abstentions to the motion. Vote was unanimous. Motion carries.

10. INFORMATION ITEMS

Any questions or comments on the informational items?

Mrs. Vitale asked if letters could be composed from the Board Members asking the legislature not to cut program dollars and ensuring the families in East Haven they do not want to lose funding for the Family Resource Center.

Mr. Inglese asked that the letter written to Cathy Finkle from Michael DiVerniero in her personnel file.

10.1 Correspondence

10.1.1 Resignations/Retirements – None

10.1.2 School Newsletters

10.1.3 FYI – Appreciation Letter from Mr. DiVerniero to Mrs. Finkle, Director of the Little Jackets Program

10.1.4 FYI – Letters and Information Regarding Family Resource Center Grant Cuts

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

11.1 Secretarial Grievances Regarding:

- **Article 21, Discipline/Reprimanding Dated 10/21/08**
- **Job Duties Outside Classification Dated 10/19/08**
- **Article 21, Written Warning Dated 10/29/08**
- **Article 21, Discipline/Reprimanding Dated 12/09/08**

Mr. Serio requested the Board table this item because the individual who was involved was unable to be here this evening.

Motion to table was made by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio and seconded by Mr. Finkle.

Any discussion on the motion? There was none.

There were no objections or abstentions to the motion. Vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Motion carries.

12. ESTABLISHMENT OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING

THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION – FEBRUARY 10, 2009 – EAST HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL, 35 WHEELBARROW LANE, EAST HAVEN, at 7:30 p.m.

13. ADJOURNMENT OF REGULAR MEETING

Motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Geraci-Anastasio and seconded by Mr. Hammell. Vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Motion carries. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

**MRS. MARILYN VITALE, CHAIRPERSON
EAST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION**